

Alberta 2003 Budget

Making Alberta Even Better



SECOND QUARTER ACTIVITY REPORT

2003-04 QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT

Updating Albertans

The government has three core businesses that make up its overall business plan and that guide government in its decision-making on behalf of Albertans. The core businesses are:

- **PEOPLE** - The goals for the *People* core business are directed at improving the quality of life in Alberta for individuals and their families through the government's priorities for health, education, our children, those in need, and Aboriginal Albertans.
- **PROSPERITY** - The goals for the *Prosperity* core business focus on protecting the quality of life in Alberta through the government's priorities for our economy, work force and work places, infrastructure, value-added industries, export trade and financial and fiscal position.
- **PRESERVATION** - The goals for the *Preservation* core business reflect the government's priorities for community safety, our renewable resources, the environment, our natural, historical and cultural resources, and Alberta's relations with other levels of government.

The purpose of quarterly activity reports is to show Albertans what activities the government undertook in the Second Quarter of this fiscal year in support of People, Prosperity and Preservation. The following pages include some of those activities from each of the government departments.

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LISTENING TO ALBERTANS

The activities that support Alberta's core businesses are often influenced by the input government receives from Albertans. Through public consultations, surveys, letters, phone calls, and e-mails Albertans tell government what's important to them and what concerns them. In the Second Quarter, Albertans had a say as government:

- **celebrated** the 100,000th phone-call received by the Ag-Info Centre, a call centre dedicated to answering the questions of agricultural producers. (Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **provided** funding and participated in the Fall Alberta Chiefs' Summit. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **participated** in the 75th Annual Assembly of the Métis Nation of Alberta Association. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **surveyed and compiled** a summary of anticipated water distribution and wastewater system issues related to northern municipalities. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **released** a summary report on the consultation on the draft *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability* consultations. The purpose of the report (www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca) is to verify that the results of the public consultation were incorporated into the *Water for Life* strategy. The final water strategy is scheduled for release in November 2003. (Environment)
- **drafted** a *Water for Life Partnership Framework* outlining the roles, responsibilities, membership and implementation of potential partnerships groups to support the watershed approach to water management. On September 16 - 17 in Red Deer, approximately 45 sector representatives from Alberta were invited to discuss the details of the proposal. Input from the workshops will be used to finalize the framework, which is expected in November 2003. (Environment)
- **provided** advice and information on registries, landlord-tenant matters and consumer issues to more than 49,000 Albertans through the Government Services toll-free call centre. (Government Services)
- **initiated** a public consultation to ensure the *Fair Trading Act*, the province's chief consumer protection law, is keeping pace with Alberta's marketplace. (Government Services)
- **surveyed** clients at 27 Labour Market Information Centres (LMICs), and found that over 89 per cent of respondents found the various LMIC resources and services useful, and the majority of clients (94 per cent) were satisfied with the overall services and information at the LMICs. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **carried out** a six-month study involving over 500 women from the Camrose area, who answered questions about employment, training needs and other issues affecting their quality of life in rural Alberta. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **surveyed** Alberta employers about the services they receive from *Canada-Alberta Job Order Bank Service (JOBS)*. Eighty-one per cent of employers were satisfied with the services they received - a significant improvement from a 68 per cent satisfaction rate in 2001. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **held** a number of meetings with representatives from the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMD&C), the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA), the Alberta

Assessors' Association, the Canadian Property Tax Association and specific industry groups to address the development of new rates and procedures for linear and regulated industrial property in Alberta. (Municipal Affairs)

- **conducted** open houses in Calgary, Lacombe, and Airdrie to gain feedback from the public regarding highway projects in those areas. (Transportation)
- **presented** opportunities for Albertans in several communities to provide input on proposed angling regulation changes for the southwest region and received comments from 100 individuals and 20 organizations that represent thousands of members. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **initiated** a cormorant control project near Lac La Biche to study cormorants and control populations as required, in response to concerns of residents that thousands of the birds may be having an impact on fishing in area lakes. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **hosted** a big game and bird game information meeting in Peace River, attended by 19 industry representatives. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **consulted** with Albertans about the Community Timber Program and its correlation to the ongoing softwood lumber dispute. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **met** with Swan Hills community leaders to discuss concerns related to timber harvesting in the area. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **participated** in various stakeholder groups throughout Alberta to provide guidance on access management, caribou conservation and the reduction of industry's footprint on the landscape. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **proclaimed** the *Agricultural Dispositions Statutes Amendment Act* and a number of other regulations related to recreational access or exploration activities on agricultural public land, following input provided by over 6,500 leaseholders and numerous stakeholders. Established a related Web site at: www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/land/recaccess/publiclandaccess.html. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **approved** 41 of the 42 recommendations created through consultation with charities, industry representatives and other Albertans contained in the report of the *MLA Review Committee on Charitable Gaming Licensing Eligibility and Use of Proceeds*. These recommendations broaden the types of community organizations that may conduct charitable gaming events, ensures effective spending of proceeds, and will ensure a training program is implemented to help organizations in their charitable gaming. (Gaming)
- **released** *A New Century for Amateur Sport: From Participation to Excellence*, and invited Albertans' feedback through posting the report and a related questionnaire to the Internet. (Community Development)
- **initiated** a consultation process with Provincial Museum of Alberta stakeholders using surveys and focus groups to determine what Albertans expect of a renewed Provincial Museum of Alberta. (Community Development)
- **released** the *Protection for Persons in Care Act* MLA Legislative Review Committee report for Albertans' comments. (Community Development)
- **launched** the Alberta Official Song contest, in tribute to our 2005 Centennial, encouraging Albertans to make submissions that reflect on what Alberta means to them in words and music. (Community Development)
- **launched** a Web site outlining proposals to assure fair, affordable, and accessible auto insurance premiums for Albertans, while protecting the rights of injured victims of collisions at: www.autoinsurance.gov.ab.ca. (Finance)
- **received** feedback from Albertans on the subject of auto insurance premiums and the treatment of injuries following collisions, and responded by developing proposals that would reduce premiums, increase treatment benefits, and establish treatment protocols that promote rapid healing. (Finance)
- **reduced** the tax rate on cigars in response to competitiveness issues raised by the cigar industry. The lowered rate on cigars still represents an increase from 2002. (Revenue)
- **responded** to over 44,500 calls through the Alberta Seniors 1-800 Information Line and Regional Seniors Information Services Offices. In addition, the regional offices provided in-person assistance to almost 9,000 clients. (Seniors)

PEOPLE

The following activities support the *People* core business and particularly areas that Albertans have identified as priority areas including health, education and children.

Promoting Health and Wellness

The state of Alberta's health care system is a priority for all Albertans. The Alberta Government continues to search for innovative ideas and initiatives to improve the sustainability of the health system and reassure Albertans that their health care needs will be addressed. In the Second Quarter, the government continued to focus on the health of Albertans as it:

- **announced** that the University of Calgary and the Calgary Health Region recruited 17 paediatric specialists with the help of \$4.5 million from an alternate funding plan. This government plan provides increased flexibility for academic physicians to increase the quality of time spent teaching, caring for patients or on research, and is expected to help attract and retain medical specialists. (Health and Wellness)
- **announced** that the Provincial Nominee Program made it possible for regional health authorities to retain 150 foreign-trained physicians, nurses and other health professionals in Alberta. (Health and Wellness)
- **released** two reports from the Expert Advisory Panel to Review Publicly Funded Health Services. The government accepted recommendations to maintain the currently funded categories of health services, and rejected recommendations to change allied health services, including optometry, podiatry, chiropractic services and community physical therapy. (Health and Wellness)
- **released** the 2003 Alberta health survey. The report indicates that Albertans remain positive about the quality of health care they receive. A majority of Albertans (87 per cent) reported they are satisfied with the way health services are provided. (Health and Wellness)
- **provided** an update on the tobacco reduction strategy through the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC). Since the announcement of the strategy in March 2002, there has been a 24 per cent decrease in cigarette sales and the smoking rate in Alberta has decreased from 25 per cent in 2001 to 23 per cent in 2002. This represents 44,000 fewer smokers. (Health and Wellness)
- **released** the *2002-2003 Alberta Health and Wellness Annual Report*. Prevention of disease, illness and injury and implementation of initiatives aimed at improving services are key achievements of the fiscal year. (Health and Wellness)
- **participated** in Alberta's multi-department West Nile virus response plan, including reporting the first case of West Nile virus in a human in Alberta, monitoring and reporting instances of infection in the province's horse population, and bird surveillance including collecting and testing bird samples to detect any presence of the disease. (Health and Wellness, Environment, Sustainable Resource Development, Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **adopted** the Particulate Matter and Ozone Management Framework for Alberta to help Alberta meet the Canada-wide standards for Particulate Matter and Ozone. This new air quality framework, which was developed by the Clean Air Strategic Alliance

- (CASA), will improve Alberta Environment's ability to manage particulate matter and ground-level ozone - the main contributors of ground level smog and pollution. (Environment)
- **participated** in the Aboriginal Tobacco Use Strategy by reviewing and selecting grant applications that enabled Aboriginal people to design their own innovative projects to address the problem of addictive or harmful use of tobacco within their own communities. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
 - **provided** funding for the Alberta First Nation Youth Leadership Conference. The focus of the conference was to work with youth to promote healthy, addiction free lifestyles. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
 - **covered** the cost of the increase in accommodations charges for Supports for Independence (SFI) and Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) recipients living in long-term care facilities. (Human Resources and Employment)
 - **provided** benefits to 59,493 children of low-income families participating in the Alberta Child Health Benefit (ACHB) program. This is an increase of approximately 4,000 over last year. The provision of health benefits through this program contributes to the long-term health and well being of low-income children, including their performance in school. (Human Resources and Employment)
 - **assisted** Lakeland County with a healthy lake study of Lac La Biche. (Sustainable Resource Development)
 - **provided** \$500,000 to Aventa's Calgary Treatment Facility, bringing the Alberta Lottery Fund's total contribution to the organization to almost \$750,000 this year. Aventa, an organization dedicated to treating addiction among women, has received over \$1.6 million from the Alberta Lottery Fund since 2000. (Gaming)
 - **successfully staged** the 2003 Alberta Seniors Games in Fort McMurray for nearly 1,200 participating seniors, approximately 1,200 volunteers, and approximately 600 non-participating spouses. (Community Development)
 - **participated** in the 2003 Western Canada Games in Manitoba, and supported nearly 400 Alberta athletes who travelled with coaches, managers, and mission staff to compete over a 10-day period. (Community Development)
 - **completed** the 65-bed Meadows Care Centre as part of Phase 1 of an \$18.9 million long-term care redevelopment. In September, a groundbreaking ceremony took place for phase 2 of the re-development, a new 65 bed long-term care facility on the old Hawthorne Centre site. (Infrastructure)
 - **opened** the \$17.3 million replacement Manning Community Health Centre in July. This new facility contains nine acute care beds, 15 continuing care beds, and space for ambulatory care, community rehabilitation and day programs. (Infrastructure)
 - **completed** Phase 1 of the Red Deer Regional Hospital \$95.8 million redevelopment. In September, staff and patients moved into the new Critical Care Building and the medical unit on the renovated third floor of the existing hospital. (Infrastructure)
 - **opened** Pembina Village in Evansburg in September. This is a public-private partnership project between the Good Samaritan Society, Capital Health, and the Government of Alberta. The Village includes a 40 bed extended care centre and community health clinic, as well as 30 supportive housing units. Total government funding is \$6.8 million. (Infrastructure)
 - **opened** the new 40 bed long-term care Bethany Care Centre and 20 unit supportive living complex in Sylvan Lake. This is a public-private partnership with the Bethany Care Group. The government's contribution to this project totals \$4.1 million. (Infrastructure)
 - **completed** construction of a new \$14.2 million Material Management and Food Production Centre, a component of Phase 3 of the \$101 million Alberta Hospital Ponoka Redevelopment capital project. The new production centre opened in September. (Infrastructure)
 - **lowered** significantly the allowable limits of tax exempt tobacco products for import into Alberta and implemented a tobacco tax collection agreement at the USA border. (Revenue)

Supporting Education and Lifelong Learning

The Alberta Government supports learning as a lifelong process and offers Albertans access to a variety of learning opportunities. In the Second Quarter, the provincial government honoured its commitment to education and lifelong learning as it:

- **partnered** with the University of Alberta and the government of Jalisco, Mexico, to advance teacher education in second languages. (Learning)
- **created** more spaces at Alberta's post-secondary institutions this fall with the allocation of 692 spaces through the Alberta government's \$40 million boost to the Access Fund. (Learning)
- **shared** information focused on Alberta's testing programs, through the development of an online interactive quiz for parents. (Learning)
- **awarded** more than \$30,000 in scholarships to Albertans through Alberta Learning's Michael Luchkovich Scholarship for Career Development. The scholarships, ranging this year from \$250 to \$1,260, were created in 1981 to encourage Albertans to upgrade their education or training. (Learning)
- **joined** together with communities across Alberta to celebrate International Adult Learners' Week. This year's theme was "*A world of possibilities through learning*". (Learning)
- **released** the provincial diploma exam and achievement test results, which show the percentage of Alberta students meeting provincial standards continues to improve, demonstrating a high level of achievement. (Learning)
- **provided** almost \$300,000 in bursaries, part of the Alberta government's Aboriginal Health Strategy, to support 84 Aboriginal students from across the province. The number of Aboriginal students funded through the Aboriginal Health Careers Bursaries has increased 60 per cent since last year. (Learning, Health and Wellness)
- **signed** an agreement with the Northwest Territories to expand and increase capacity for learner assessment services in areas outside of Alberta. (Learning)
- **shared** ideas and best practices at an international leadership summit focusing on lifelong learning. This summit was part of a larger, eight-month training program for Vietnamese university planning officers developed in partnership with Alberta's post-secondary institutions and led by NAIT. (Learning)
- **released** the *2002-03 Alberta Learning Annual Report*, which demonstrates how one of the best learning systems in the world continues to build on its success to benefit learners of all ages. (Learning)
- **developed** a new information section on Alberta Learning's Web site "*Campus Media Connection*". This year-round communication tool equips students attending universities and colleges with important information and key contacts. (Learning)
- **released** results from the 2002-03 class-size survey, indicating Alberta's kindergarten classes had an average of 19.5 students while Grade 1 to 6 classes had an average of 23.2 students - down from 19.7 per kindergarten class and 23.6 per Grade 1 to 6 class the year before. For Grade 7 to 9 classes, the average class size in math, language arts, social studies and science was 25.5 students. (Learning)
- **provided** funding to the Heritage Community Foundation for the Aboriginal Youth Identity Edukits project. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)

- **provided** funding to the Child and Youth Friendly Calgary for the "Future Gathering" workshop designed to lead to the reduction of racism and discrimination, through improving communication, understanding and mutual respect by fostering development of leadership skills, intercultural fun and friendships. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **funded** projects under the *Northern LINKS Program* with goals to assist northern Alberta students in their transition from secondary to post-secondary education. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **cooperated** with Alberta Learning to introduce the *Youth Apprenticeship Project* and pilot projects related to this initiative. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Learning)
- **partnered** with FEESA, a non-profit Environmental Education Society, to deliver the Water in Alberta Education Institute. This eight-day event provided Alberta teachers with information about Alberta's water resources and focused on how to incorporate water topics into classroom programs. (Environment)
- **developed** a new water conservation Web site (www.gov.ab.ca/env/water/Conservation/index.cfm) to improve access to information on how to conserve water. Water education and conservation are two key components of the *Water for Life* strategy. (Environment)
- **responded** to approximately 63,000 inquiries, through the Student Funding Contact Centre (SFCC), from students and educational institutions seeking information about student funding issues. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **hosted** 25 post-secondary students from Quebec via the Quebec/Alberta Exchange. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **provided** employment opportunities to 3,769 students through the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP) this past summer. STEP jobs enhance future learning, expedite career paths, and provide a school to work transition and earnings for further education. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **expanded** access for Occupational Training (short-term skills training), previously only available to Employment Insurance (EI) recipients, to include those SFI clients and low income Albertans who meet financial and training eligibility requirements. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **provided** 12 aboriginal students with mechanical construction trades training under the First Nations Training to Employment program, made possible by AHRE Fort McMurray and many partners, including the Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC), the local Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Team, Métis Nations Association (MNA) Zone 1, and various oil and gas companies within the municipality of Wood Buffalo (members of the ATC/Industry Agreement). (Human Resources and Employment)
- **increased** part-time training grant from \$600/term to \$1200/term for low-income Albertans and SFI clients who meet financial and training eligibility requirements. This enables low-income Albertans to learn while they earn and increases potential for people with disabilities to benefit from part-time training. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **provided** information relating to career planning to approximately 5,567 people through the Career Information Hotline. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **produced** *It's About Time to Choose a Post-Secondary Program*, the annual publication detailing the programs provided by Alberta's public post-secondary institutions and *The Investigator*, a reference guide to contacts, telephone numbers and websites for career, learning, workplace and employment information. Both publications are available on-line at: www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **provided** the Transportation Training and Development Association with funding to support the agreement with Alberta Learning to develop a professional driver training curriculum. (Transportation)
- **presented** information about fish and wildlife to 1,200 Albertans through school talks, public consultations and trade fairs. (Sustainable Resource Development)

- **co-ordinated** a youth delegation at the 12th World Forestry Congress in Quebec City to participate in a youth forum for future forest professionals to discuss sustainable resource development and conservation. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **facilitated** the attendance of seven Junior Forest Wardens and Junior Forest Rangers at the 12th World Forestry Congress held in Quebec. The young delegates participated in plenary sessions, youth forums, responded to inquiries at the Alberta exhibit and represented Alberta at various Congress functions. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **launched** *Wild Alberta*, a permanent gallery at the Provincial Museum of Alberta that provides a new perspective on Alberta's natural heritage through combining habitat dioramas with the latest interactive technology and new displays. (Community Development)
- **opened** the ATCO Tyrrell Learning Centre at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology in Drumheller, adding more than 16,000 square feet to the museum, with three learning zones, a hands-on workshop, a distance learning studio, and an innovative outdoor interpretive area. This was the Government of Alberta's first legacy project to commemorate the province's 100th anniversary in 2005. (Community Development)
- **partnered** with Weigl Publishing to produce a series of children's books that focus on prehistoric life and contain a Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology endorsement seal. (Community Development)
- **completed** an Oil Sands Discovery Centre Reference Room in Fort McMurray that enables the public to seek information on the oil sands industry. (Community Development)
- **completed** a \$3.8 million modernization and addition to a K-12 school in Boyle for the Aspen View Regional Division. (Infrastructure)
- **approved** two major contracts: The Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High Project at \$25 million (Red Deer Public) and the Rocky Mountain House Multi-Campus at \$17 million (Wild Rose and Red Deer Catholic). (Infrastructure)
- **opened** seven new schools in September: Citadel Elementary/Jr High School, Calgary; Coventry Hills Elementary School, Calgary; Hidden Valley Elementary School, Calgary; Monterey Park Elementary School, Calgary; Somerset Elementary School, Calgary; Holy Spirit Academy, High River; and Ecole La Verendrye, Lethbridge. The total government support for these projects is \$33.0 million. (Infrastructure)
- **announced** an additional \$1.7 million for school boards throughout Alberta to assist with their emergent spatial needs for September 2003. These funds are in addition to the \$144.7 million for new projects announced as part of Budget 2003. (Infrastructure)
- **developed**, in cooperation with other jurisdictions, a curriculum unit relating to the impact of the underground economy and arranged for field testing in sample Alberta schools starting in October. (Revenue)

Supporting Families and Children

Every government ministry is responsible for initiatives that contribute to an atmosphere where Alberta families can succeed and flourish. In this Quarter, the government:

- **launched** a new child care online subsidy application in August 2003. The online application helps families by providing a quicker, simpler and more easily understood application process. (Children's Services)
- **represented** Alberta in Geneva during the United Nations' review of Canada's second report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Alberta's portion of the report outlines recent programs, initiatives and legislation in place to improve the rights of children. (Children's Services)
- **transferred** delegated authority to provide child welfare services from the Southwest Alberta Child and Family Services Authority to the Blood Tribe in southwest Alberta took place in July 2003. The agreement means the Blood Tribe will now be responsible for providing child welfare services to its own people on the Blood Reserve. (Children's Services)
- **launched** a Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution public awareness campaign during the summer festival season. The chalkart, featured in high traffic areas during the Calgary Stampede, Red Deer Westerner Days, Edmonton Fringe Festival and Lethbridge Whoop-Up Days, portrayed the message that "together we can stop the abuse." (Children's Services)
- **contributed** \$150,000 to the Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank to purchase meat and distribute it to food banks across the province. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **changed** SFI and AISH program policies to reflect the new definition of spouse, consistent with the new Adult Interdependent Relationships Act. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **consulted** with 80 different groups, including training providers and advocacy groups, on proposed regulations of the new *Income and Employment Supports Act*. These regulations will provide a simplified and harmonized approach for the provision of income support to low-income Albertans and increase accountability between training providers and the government. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **released** a new booklet, *Your Guide*, for the use of Albertans with questions about SFI. The guide includes information on conducting job searches, calculating financial benefits, the amount of assistance available, calculating earning exemptions, and the rights and responsibilities of SFI recipients. Copies of *Your Guide* are available at all Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) offices, or online at: www.gov.ab.ca/hre/sfi. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **worked** with the City of Edmonton on the Families First Edmonton research project to test whether coordinated delivery of health, family support and recreation can provide better outcomes for low-income families. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **established** a partnership in August 2003 between Children's Services and AHRE in Whitecourt to provide career and employment services for young people aged 13 to 17 years to help them make the transition into the workforce. (Human Resources and Employment, Children's Services)

- **continued** financial benefits for individual victims who have incurred injury as a result of violent crime and continued support for Alberta organizations dedicated to helping victims of crime. Financial benefits and grants are allocated from the Victims of Crime Fund, which is committed to supporting programs that benefit victims of crime. (Solicitor General)
- **provided** approximately 8,800 low income seniors living in long term care facilities with a Supplementary Accommodation Benefit of up to \$370 per month to help cover the increase in long term care accommodates rates. (Seniors)
- **produced** the 2003-04 *Seniors Programs and Services Information Guide*, the premier source for information on programs and services for seniors in Alberta. Distributed 26,000 copies of the guide. (Seniors)
- **distributed** 20,000 copies of the 2003-04 *Alberta Care Directory* in partnership with the Alberta Long Term Care Association. (Seniors)
- **approved** 7,465 applications from lower-income seniors under the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program for a total of approximately \$12 million. (Seniors)
- **processed** around 2,700 new applications under the Alberta Seniors Benefit Program. (Seniors)
- **provided** approximately \$46.5 million to over 126,000 seniors under the Alberta Seniors Benefit program. (Seniors)
- **provided** approximately \$19.8 million in grants to support the housing needs of low-income families, seniors and people with special needs. (Seniors)
- **provided** approximately \$1 million in funding to support four homeless shelters. (Seniors)
- **provided** \$197,700 to 45 applicants under the Home Adaptation Program to assist them in completing modifications to improve wheelchair access and mobility. (Seniors)
- **provided** \$7.4 million to housing management bodies to cover additional operating and maintenance expenses for lodge and social housing units. (Seniors)
- **provided** parents, teachers and students with useful Back to School Information kits to help students with the transition back to school. (Learning)
- **initiated** a cross ministry initiative that will improve access to and coordination of services to children with complex health needs. (Learning)
- **provided** grants, totaling \$427,450, to 32 rural communities through the Community Adult Learning Program - Rural Innovation and Access Funding to deliver learning opportunities such as: Life Skills for Adults with mental health and cognitive impairment, "Heads Up" for youth moving to the city, *Help your child read and write*, *Parenting during and after divorce*, and Adult ESL classes. (Learning)
- **co-hosted** the 22nd Annual Meeting of Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for the Status of Women with Honourable Jean Augustine, Secretary of State for the Status of Women. Topics included violence against women, women's health and women's economic equality. (Community Development)
- **partnered** with ACCESS television to produce The Alphabet Museum at the Provincial Museum of Alberta, a 26-segment series targeted at young children and their caregivers that will be broadcast for the next four years. Each segment features an artifact, described by a curator or interpreter, corresponding to a letter in the alphabet. (Community Development)
- **opened** a revitalized and refocused Shell Discovery Centre within the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology that is designed specifically for toddlers and parents. (Community Development)

PROSPERITY

The following activities support the *Prosperity* core business and contribute to a better quality of life for Albertans.

Strengthening the Alberta Economy

Alberta is expected to be a leader in economic growth in 2003-04 and various government ministries are involved in a number of initiatives to ensure that trend continues. In this Quarter, the government:

- **announced** \$79-million in further interim support assistance for Alberta cattle producers including a \$65 million Fed Cattle Competitive Bid Program, \$10 million in changes to the Alberta Disaster Assistance Loan Program and the Alberta Farm Development Loan Program, and a \$4 million Stranded Beef Export Container initiative. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **extended** the national BSE recovery program to offer financial assistance to other livestock including bison, elk, deer and sheep. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **committed** to further financial assistance for bison, veal, sheep, goat, elk and deer producers through the Alberta BSE Slaughter Market Adjustment Program for Other Ruminants. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **worked** with the cattle industry to develop the Fed Cattle Competitive Market Adjustment Program to compensate cattle producers for market losses due to the closure of international borders to beef trade. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **announced** agreement with Agriculture and Agri-food Canada to allow Alberta producers access to the Canadian Farm Business Advisory Services (CFBAS), a single entry point for professional business planning services. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **launched** the Canada-Alberta Farm Water Program as a result of Alberta's signing of the Agricultural Policy Framework. The program will offer Alberta producers assistance in developing essential long-term on-farm water supplies. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **attended** the Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture (WASDA) Annual Meeting in Sacramento, California to advocate the opening of the United States border to Canadian beef. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **signed** a memorandum of understanding with Vietnam that will open markets to Canadian beef and other agricultural products. (Learning, Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **coordinated** Alberta Government review and release of the Canada West Foundation Report entitled "Achieving Potential: Towards Improved Labour Market Outcomes for Aboriginal People". (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **provided** employment training to workers across Alberta impacted by BSE to enable them to adapt to changing labour market conditions. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **placed** a record 5,672 job postings onto the Canada-Alberta Job Bank in July. (Human Resources and Employment)

- **developed** a new Transportation and Warehousing Occupational Skills Training Program designed to provide Alberta Job Corps trainees with basic skill sets as well as specific occupational skills that reflect industry standards. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **involved** in a successful project with the Camrose Neighborhood Youth Centre involving 10 youth, ages 17 to 20, identified as having high barriers to employment. Job Coaches were used and the youth were placed with employers in the private sector. At the end of three months, six clients are employed/self supporting. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **developed**, with the Human Resources Committee of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, HRDC, and Bow Valley College, the Talent Pool Project to connect Calgary Chamber members and other Calgary employers with skilled underemployed or unemployed people. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **graduated** 13 students from the Personal Care Attendant Program in July under the Human Resources and Employment First Nations Training to Employment program - a partnership between Blood Tribe Employment and Skills Training Division, Blood Tribe Health, Lethbridge Community College and Human Resources and Employment. All 13 graduates are employed either with Blood Tribe Health or off reserve with local Health Region or service agencies. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **co-funded**, with the Alberta Restaurant & Foodservices Association (ARFA), an Human Resources and Employment coordinator to facilitate placement of people with disabilities in the industry. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **hosted** top information technology firms and influential North American investors during the province's Innovation and Investment Week, September 2-8. This is the second annual week of events intended to assist local companies in attracting capital investment to the province. (Innovation and Science)
- **launched** the Alberta Tourism Signage Initiative in partnership with Alberta Economic Development, Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development and Alberta Community Development. The initiative will bring forward sign guidelines to enhance tourism and motorist safety in Alberta. (Transportation, Economic Development, Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Community Development)
- **announced** a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and has begun a process that will see the south-east leg of the Edmonton ring road become Alberta's first highway public-private partnership project. (Transportation)
- **supported** a mission of media delegates from Japan who interviewed several industry leaders including commercial, provincial, and federal officers. They also met with Premier Klein regarding Canada's food safety system and its relationship to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). Their reports were published in September 2003 to a large industry audience in Japan. (Economic Development)
- **organized** meetings of delegates from the State of Jalisco, Mexico, including Governor Ramirez. The governor met with Premier Klein to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding between Alberta and Jalisco. During the meeting, he acknowledged the difficulties the province has been facing regarding BSE and promised to raise Alberta's interest in gaining access for live cattle with President Fox of Mexico. (Economic Development)
- **carried out** a program entitled Advantage 2003 to attract senior executives, investors, and key decision makers from around the world to visit Alberta over a four-day period. Twenty international business executives met with over 80 Alberta companies to discuss business and investment opportunities. (Economic Development)
- **finalized** a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a funding agreement with the Regional Economic Development Initiative Association for Northwestern Alberta, the most recently established regional economic development alliance. (Economic Development)

- **facilitated** incoming aerospace missions to Alberta, involving delegations from Sikorsky Aircraft and Lockheed Martin Aerospace, in cooperation with the Alberta Aerospace Association and Western Economic Diversification. These major aerospace contractors are competing for a \$3.06 billion Department of National Defence contract to replace Canada's aging Sea King fleet of helicopters. Awareness of Alberta's aerospace capabilities was heightened through a series of presentations and pre-scheduled individual meetings. (Economic Development)
- **attended** environmental fair EnviroPro 2003 in Mexico, to promote Alberta interests in the environment sector, profile Alberta environmental capabilities, and expand the contact between Alberta and Mexican counterparts. Participants of this mission included 14 Alberta companies that represented environment services, products, technologies, and clean development mechanism (CDM) technologies. (Economic Development)
- **launched** the Innovative Manufacturing Week, September 22 - 26, 2003, in partnership with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Economic Development Edmonton, and the Canadian Plastics Industry Association, showcasing innovation in the Alberta manufacturing industry through workshops, industry events, tours, and information fairs held across Alberta. (Economic Development)
- **assisted** with environmental impact assessments of the Canadian National Resources Limited Horizon and Shell Jackpine Oilsands mines and participated in Energy and Utilities Board hearings on the applications. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **participated** in the 12th World Forestry Congress in Quebec City where over 4,000 delegates from 140 countries participated in discussions on the theme *Forests - Source of Life for the Planet and Its People*. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **signed** a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the governments of Alberta and Jalisco, Mexico at the 12th World Forestry Congress in Quebec City. This agreement commits to the exchange of information related to technology, research, education and training in the areas of sustainable forest management, parks and protected areas. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **announced** a revised Natural Gas Rebate Program. This program will provide Albertans with rebates when the regulated price of gas on the majority of Albertans' monthly bills is over \$5.50 per gigajoule (GJ) from November through March. The rebate program will remain in effect for a three-year term ending March 31, 2006. (Energy)
- **initiated** a policy consultation to address long-standing transmission system needs. The proposed transmission policy supports building transmission infrastructure to meet the future needs of the province, including extension of the current system and reinforcement of the major connections. Transmission is the backbone of the electric system and a safe and reliable transmission 'grid' ensures efficiency of Alberta's electric system and continued reliable service to consumers. (Energy)
- **celebrated** the ten year anniversary of Alberta's privatization of retail liquor outlets. As of August of this year, there are 1,008 retail liquor outlets in the province contributing to over \$535 million in government liquor revenues. People continue to support the increased choice and convenience that privatization has provided, which has allowed for 11,000 liquor products to be available. (Gaming)
- **awarded** 15 grants, totalling \$96,000, to communities and local organizations to host western Canadian, national, and international athletic events in Alberta. (Community Development)
- **facilitated** a Discovering Export Resources symposium in Red Deer for the Central Alberta Economic Partnership involving over 40 participants. (Community Development)
- **piloted** a zero impact seismic project in Saskatoon Mountain Natural Area to contribute to more effective management of the natural area and to help industry to better image the subsurface resources adjacent to the natural area. (Community Development)
- **released** the annual reports of Alberta government ministries that show Albertans how the government is addressing priorities and managing tax dollars. The annual reports are one way the government is accountable to the public for the programs, services, and activities undertaken for Albertans. (Finance)

- **highlighted** the establishment of the province's new fiscal framework, which includes Alberta's Sustainability Fund and Capital Account, in the Alberta Finance annual report. Also highlighted was that Albertans have the highest personal disposable income per capita of any province, and the lowest personal taxes in Canada. (Finance)
- **updated** Albertans on the government's first quarter activities and fiscal position, which forecasts a strong position for the Sustainability Fund by the end of the fiscal year. (Finance)
- **continued** to defend Alberta's forestry practices in response to U.S. softwood lumber trade action. Also continued to participate in Canada's North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and World Trade Organization (WTO) challenges related to the softwood lumber dispute. (International and Intergovernmental Relations)
- **conveyed** Alberta's trade priorities to federal ministers and trade representatives from other countries during the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in September. (International and Intergovernmental Relations)
- **promoted** the safety of Canadian beef and the role that Alberta can play in North American energy markets at a meeting of the Western Governors' Association. (International and Intergovernmental Relations)
- **participated** in the annual meeting of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region in Calgary. The meeting focused on information sharing in a number of areas critical to Alberta including BSE, energy development, and border issues. (International and Intergovernmental Relations)
- **released** the *2003-04 First Quarter Update for Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund*. At June 30, 2003 the Fund's fair value stood at \$11.7 billion. (Revenue)
- **established** the Endowment Fund Policy Committee to provide a broad range of input on the investment policy of the Heritage Fund and other government endowment funds. (Revenue)
- **strengthened** the mandate and membership of the Investment Operations Committee to oversee the province's \$38 billion investment management function. (Revenue)

Improving Efficiency and Innovation

Albertans have worked hard to establish our province as a leader in technology and innovation. In addition the government is constantly examining ways in which it can provide services to Albertans more efficiently. In this Quarter, the government:

- **committed** to investing \$15 million into a new livestock testing facility, as well as enhanced surveillance programs and improvements to existing lab facilities to ensure the best animal disease and food safety surveillance systems in the world. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **celebrated** the Institute of Public Administration of Canada's bronze award for excellence in public service for 'Ropin' Knowledge and Herdin' Cats', a unique knowledge management project within Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **assisted** various Native Friendship Centres in developing better business practices. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **participated** with representatives of the Lac Cardinal Regional Economic Board to discuss advancing innovation in Northwest Alberta. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **launched** the Appeals Secretariat Web site in July 2003 at www.gov.ab.ca/appeals to increase awareness of the appeal process and Albertans' right to appeal decisions affecting income support programs. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **opened** a new storefront Labour Market Information Centre in downtown Edmonton. The innovative resource centre will help Albertans access employment and career information and financial assistance at a single point of entry. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **opened** a new heavy oil extraction test facility near Fort McMurray to explore a technology that could reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 85 per cent. The \$30 million project is a joint initiative between the provincial and federal governments and nine leading Canadian oil and gas producers (the DOVAP consortium). The Alberta government, through the Alberta Energy Research Institute (AERI), has committed \$7.5 million to the project. (Innovation and Science)
- **launched** the line-up for 2003-04 *Innovation Series* seminars. The Innovation Series is a business development initiative designed to assist small and medium sized companies in the information and communications technology and life sciences sectors. Tailored for these sectors, the seminars help businesses manage the development of new technology and take their own innovations to market. (Innovation and Science)
- **announced** a joint \$1.23 million federal-provincial contribution towards the development of a low field, high performance MRI at the University of Calgary. The project will strive to build a lower cost system than currently exists, ultimately making MRI technology more accessible and affordable for patients. Greater access to a machine capable of detecting disease in its early stages would mean more successful treatments at a fraction of the current cost. (Innovation and Science)

- **celebrated** a successful conclusion of the Medical Devices Development Program (MDDP) at the University of Calgary. This four-year program provided practical learning experiences for over 200 students from five Alberta educational institutions. The students worked with medical professionals and 12 industry sponsors on early-stage product development for over 40 medical device projects. (Innovation and Science)
- **announced** *ME first!*, the Municipal Energy Efficiency Assistance Program. *ME First!* is a four-year, \$100 million program (\$25 million per year) that allows Alberta municipalities to access interest-free loans for energy efficiency projects. Program funding will be allocated on a per capita basis. (Municipal Affairs, Environment, Finance)
- **announced** the recipients of the 2003 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence. The awards are presented annually to municipalities for leading practices in the categories of innovation, partnership, and outstanding achievement. These and other leading municipal practices are collected on the Municipal Excellence Network Web site, where they are available as a learning resource for all Alberta municipalities. The recipients of the 2003 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence were the City of Lethbridge, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, the Town of High River and the Municipal District of Foothills No. 31. (Municipal Affairs)
- **expanded** its pilot project of using asphalt rubber for surfacing on provincial highways. (Transportation)
- **committed**, along with Transport Canada, to funding a pilot project that allows the electronic completion of traffic violation, collision and commercial vehicle inspection forms within a police vehicle. The project is expected to significantly improve the quality of traffic safety data, allowing for improved analysis and program design. (Transportation)
- **approved**, as part of the Rail Safety Program, the operation of all public short-line railways in the province, and is now completing the analysis and approvals of industrial and amusement railways under the *Railway (Alberta) Act*. (Transportation)
- **transferred** responsibility for the room, board and housing keeping portion of long-term care to Alberta Seniors from Alberta Health and Wellness in August 2003 which brings responsibility for all housing, particularly seniors housing, under one ministry. (Seniors)
- **hosted** a South African delegation from the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to collaborate on ideas and issues related to sustainable forest management and performance reporting systems. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **opened** the Energy Utilities Board Fort McMurray regional office in August. With current staff of 11 this office will provide an improved level of service to all EUB stakeholders. (Energy)
- **initiated** a study on the state of tourism management in Alberta's parks and protected areas network targeting major provincial parks such as Cypress Hills, Dinosaur, Writing-on-Stone, and Lesser Slave Lake. (Community Development)
- **implemented** a new consultant selection policy for all of the department's contracted consulting services. The new policy is intended to provide greater accessibility to the department's contracts, improve transparency and fairness in the department's consultant selection practices, and help attain better value for money spent on consulting services. (Infrastructure)

PRESERVATION

The following activities support the *Preservation* core business to ensure Alberta's communities are strong and safe and Alberta's natural, cultural and historical resources are protected.

Building Stronger and Safer Communities

Albertans take pride in their communities. They require leadership from government on issues of safety, and flexibility from government on determining what initiatives will best strengthen their communities. The government supports numerous initiatives that improve safety and build stronger communities. In the Second Quarter of 2003-04, the Alberta government:

-
- **provided** funding to the KARA Family Support for a presentation to community members on "Reclaiming Youth". Working with the community, the Reclaiming Youth Initiative will develop strategies to re-integrate youth-at-risk into the community. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
 - **participated** with the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation on northern air, rail and road transportation issues that could result in the building of stronger northern Alberta communities. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
 - **participated** with the Athabasca Oil Sands Developers on an initiative to develop transportation infrastructure for the further development of the oil sands in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
 - **provided** funding for the Aboriginal Family Mediation conference aimed at alleviating family violence. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
 - **joined** forces with Canadian and American law enforcement and consumer agencies to tackle the growing problem of cross-border fraud, particularly by Canadian telemarketers targeting American consumers. The Alberta Partnership Against Cross-Border Fraud will co-ordinate law enforcement activities; identify fraudulent and misleading marketing practices; and support law enforcement actions taken by partners against deceptive marketers. (Government Services)
 - **issued** consumer alerts to caution Albertans on unscrupulous businesses and provided consumer tips for dealing with a variety of situations in the marketplace. Subjects included door-to-door sellers and funeral home operators. (Government Services)
 - **completed** 476 investigations related to consumer protection and recovered more than \$225,000 for Alberta consumers. (Government Services)
 - **produced** the Annual Occupational Injuries and Disease (OID) Summary and sector publications for the construction, trucking, upstream oil and gas, and forestry industry associations. The OID report, which provides a comprehensive picture of workplace health and safety, can be accessed online at: www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/oid2002.pdf. (Human Resources and Employment)
 - **welcomed** the Alberta Home Builders Association as a "Sponsoring Partner in Safety". The Association will require employers of sub-trades to complete the Construction Safety Training System program of the Alberta Construction Safety Association. (Human Resources and Employment)

- **approved** the 2003 Grimshaw Disaster Recovery Program that will provide \$400,000 to assist with the town's emergency operations costs, cleanup costs and insurance shortfalls from a severe weather event that occurred in June 2003. (Municipal Affairs)
- **initiated** the 2003 Northwest Alberta Disaster Recovery Program that will provide \$3.8 million to assist with the costs of flood damage to municipal and provincial infrastructure incurred in mid-April. (Municipal Affairs)
- **initiated** the 2003 Crowsnest Pass Disaster Recovery Program that will provide \$2.5 million to assist with the costs associated with emergency operations, security of evacuated areas and emergency construction that took place during the July 2003 Lost Creek fire. (Municipal Affairs)
- **expanded** Alberta's Emergency Public Warning System to the Fort McMurray/Wood Buffalo region in September 2003, allowing residents to hear warning messages about life-threatening emergencies or child abductions. (Municipal Affairs)
- **began** work upgrading the seismic monitoring and warning system on Turtle Mountain. The project is expected to cost \$1.1 million. (Municipal Affairs)
- **received** 244 grant applications under the Municipal Sponsorship Program (MSP). Twenty-seven grants totalling over \$736,000 have been funded to date. The remaining 129 applications are at various stages in the approval process. The MSP offers grants for projects promoting innovation, excellence and cooperation in improving municipal government, administration and services. The grants are available to municipalities with populations of 20,000 or less. (Municipal Affairs)
- **provided** 400 new intoxilyzers to RCMP and municipal police services to help reduce the province's high-impaired driving rate. The intoxilyzers will be used by police as a roadside screening device to determine whether or not a driver has been drinking. (Solicitor General)
- **honoured** 80 men and women who have died in the line of duty in Alberta since 1876, during the 5th Alberta Police and Peace Officer's Memorial Day. Representatives from enforcement agencies across the province joined Lieutenant Governor Lois Hole to honour police and peace officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice. (Solicitor General)
- **toughened** provincially-run correctional facilities with a new zero tolerance policy toward violence, dangerous or threatening behaviour by inmates towards staff. The *Corrections Amendment Act* was put into force on September 30 and introduces random drug testing of inmates. It was also announced that corrections staff would be equipped with tasers to briefly immobilize aggressive or violent inmates. (Solicitor General)
- **reinforced** the need to establish a meaningful sex offender registry and curtail the spread of methamphetamine and marijuana use and manufacture at a federal/provincial/ territorial meeting in Quebec. The meeting brought together all of Canada's Solicitors General and Justice Ministers to discuss a wide range of topics including a national sex offender registry, organized crime, policing, corrections, and victims of crime issues. (Solicitor General)
- **presented** the Alberta Counter-Terrorism Crisis Management Plan (ACTCMP) to the U.S. based Regional Information Sharing System (RISS) law enforcement group that represents all American States. The ACTCMP was also presented to partners in the Montana office of the U.S. Attorney General, Montana law enforcement agencies and Montana industry representatives. These sessions have solidified relations with Montana State and law enforcement partners, US federal partners and US industry partners to facilitate information sharing on terrorism and extremism issues. (Solicitor General)
- **announced** funding through the Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program (ICAP) for infrastructure projects throughout Alberta, including a \$30 million water pipeline in southern Alberta. (Transportation)
- The Alberta Administrative License Suspension program for impaired drivers and the Transportation Safety Board's ability to hear appeals were challenged in the courts (has been ongoing since 1999). The Alberta Court of Appeal has ruled the program doesn't offend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the appeal was dismissed. (Transportation)

- **announced** funding through the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program (SHIP) for a \$12.5 million interchange in Brooks. (Transportation)
- **approved** an additional 12 projects following the second round of approvals for the 2003-04 Resource Road Program. (Transportation)
- **approved** eight projects through the new Cities Special Transportation Grant to assist with high priority transportation projects. (Transportation)
- **began consultation** with the Alberta Medical Association to refine the driver medical reporting process, including reporting formats and medical practitioner education. (Transportation)
- **completed** the Apartment Rental Cost and Vacancy Survey in 63 communities across Alberta which will provide information for determining high-need communities under the Affordable Housing Partnership Initiative. (Seniors)
- **held** the 2003 Seniors Services Workshop, a provincial conference that gives seniors service providers current information on programs and services available to seniors. Over 190 people participated from 51 communities across the province. (Seniors)
- **assumed** responsibility for direct management of the Sunalta Emergency Shelter to ensure it continued to provide overnight accommodation for up to 150 clients. (Seniors)
- **fought** 591 wildfires in Alberta (that burned 53,361 hectares) and loaned staff to fight wildfires in B.C. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **assisted** with the evacuation of more than 2,000 people in communities in the Crowsnest Pass. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **provided** 490 fire personnel to assist with fighting wildfires in other provinces. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **issued** 10 orders related to fire bans and forest closures because of dry conditions and the risk of wildfires. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **assisted** with a successful 3,000-hectare prescribed burn at Rock Lake, in co-operation with Jasper National Park staff. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **assisted** with the development of nine FireSmart strategies for communities. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **continued** to deliver bear awareness programs to oil and gas companies in the Peace River area. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **conducted** grizzly bear aversive conditioning work in Kananaskis Country to protect the community and to educate people about how bears and humans can co-exist. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **relocated** a substantial number of wildlife to protect communities, including 90 bears, 2 cougars, 14 ungulates (deer, elk, moose) and 157 other animals. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **The Energy Utilities Board continues** to address the 87 recommendations of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Public Safety and Sour Gas. Work continues on 58 recommendations, 26 recommendations have been completed, and the remaining 3 recommendations will be started by April 2004. (Energy)
- **published** the Provincial Advisory Committee's *Evaluation of the EUB's Implementation Progress on Public Safety and Sour Gas Initiative*. The report noted the "commendable progress made to date" and provided comments that the EUB is addressing. At the Advisory Committee's request the EUB will now issue a semi-annual, rather than quarterly progress report. The semi-annual PS&SG progress report will be published in October 2003 on the EUB Web site at: www.eub.gov.ab.ca. (Energy)
- **issued** almost 1,200 charitable gaming licenses to community groups throughout the province. These fundraising activities support everything from minor league hockey to religious organizations and promotes community involvement throughout Alberta. Through charitable gaming events, over \$200 million was raised last year for various community organizations. (Gaming)

- **provided** funding to thousands of projects throughout Alberta. Lottery funding has allowed for such projects and initiatives as breast cancer research (\$46,000 to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation), community centre renovations (\$125,000 to the Hinton Community Centre), and new books for Albertans to enjoy (\$20,000 to the Spruce Grove Public Library). (Gaming)
- **completed** almost 10,000 inspections to ensure liquor, gaming, and tobacco compliance. The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission remains diligent in its efforts to inform licensees of provincial policy and to strictly enforce liquor and gaming regulations. Tobacco retailers are monitored to ensure that only eligible individuals may purchase tax-exempt tobacco products and that tax-exempt sales are accurately accounted for. (Gaming)
- **created** the *Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission Diversity Leadership Award of Distinction* to recognize organizations that embrace diversity in their workforce and that are working toward eliminating discrimination and barriers to fair employment. (Community Development)
- **provided** sport, recreation, arts, and cultural programs to children and youth in 12 Aboriginal communities as part of the Alberta's Future Leaders and Arts Camps programs. (Community Development)
- **presented** the *Protection for Persons in Care Act* to more than 130 nursing attendant students and 27 health care providers to enhance education on the prevention of abuse. (Community Development)
- **presented** the Alberta Emergency Services Medal to 12 Conservation Officers in Kananaskis Country who have dedicated themselves to protecting others and who each have 12 or more years of service responding to the safety of Albertans. (Community Development)
- **presented** the Conditional Sentencing options paper to the Federal Government. The options paper proposes changes to the conditional sentencing provisions under the Canadian *Criminal Code*. The paper includes ways the provisions can be amended to ensure that those convicted of serious offences are not eligible for what is commonly known as "house arrest." (Justice)
- **completed** upgrading and addition to Smithfield Lodge in Westlock. This project included upgrading of the existing 44 unit seniors' lodge, and the construction of 60 units of new supportive housing. Total government funding for this project totals \$2.6 million. (Infrastructure)
- **participated** in the official opening of the Devonshire Continuing Care Centre in Terwillegar in August. This facility will provide 125 new long-term care beds for the Edmonton region, and assisted living housing for 200 seniors. The total government support for these projects is \$8.1 million. (Infrastructure)
- **opened** the new \$6 million Peace River Community Health Centre 40 bed long-term care wing in July. Also in Peace River, the \$1.8 million upgrading of the Heritage Towers Complex, a 40-unit seniors lodge commenced. (Infrastructure)

Protecting Alberta's Natural and Cultural Heritage

Albertans want to ensure Alberta's awe-inspiring natural beauty and rich cultural heritage is preserved for future generations. In the Second Quarter, the Alberta government:

- **provided** funding to the Métis Nation of Alberta Association for a Métis Cultural event. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **assisted** the Athabasca Landing Foundation with its interpretative centre project. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **announced** funding for two new projects through the Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program (ICAP) celebrating the contributions and cultural heritage of Edmonton's Chinese community. (Transportation)
- **publicly** released the *Report on Grizzly Bear Assessment of Allocation*, produced by Alberta's Grizzly Bear Technical Committee. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **completed** draft recovery plans for the burrowing owl and peregrine falcon and continued to make progress with recovery plans for species including grizzly bears, trumpeter swans and woodland caribou. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **accepted** recommendations from the Endangered Species Conservation Committee and classified lake sturgeon, shortjaw cisco and western silvery minnow as threatened and listed the prairie falcon as a species of special concern. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **Fish and wildlife officers spoke** with more than 18,000 people during compliance checks aimed at educating the public and helping reduce wildlife poaching. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **investigated** 746 instances of illegal activities involving fish and wildlife. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **worked** with the Bighorn Backcountry Monitoring Group to provide advice in planning, implementing, monitoring and managing access in the Bighorn Backcountry. (More information is available at: www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/regions/southwest/bighorn/.) (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **developed** an environmental education and stewardship program called "Respect the Land," e.g., the Random Camping educational program that targets responsible use of the public lands. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **presented** recognition certificates to ancestors of east-central Alberta pioneers, at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, in honour of the dedication, spirit, and accomplishments of their ancestors in settling east-central Alberta 100 years ago. (Community Development)
- **provided** the funding for Alberta 2005 Centennial Legacy grant projects that were opened during this period: Medalta Potteries/Hycroft China historic site in Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie's Centre 2000, the Fringe Theatre's Arts Barns in Edmonton and the Hotel Selkirk at Fort Edmonton. (Community Development)
- **granted** a total of \$85,000 to the first recipients of the recently inaugurated Federal/Provincial/Territorial Historic Places Initiative: Lamont County and the municipalities of Fort Macleod, Cochrane and High River. (Community Development)

- **responded** to the prolonged drought and above average temperatures in southern Alberta through implementing extensive fire bans, trail closures, and travel bans. Wild fire risk was reduced and public safety protected through implementing a complete fire ban in most provincial parks and recreation areas in southern Alberta and throughout Kananaskis Country. (Community Development)
- **celebrated** Parks Day 2003 with a variety of events in parks across the province, including special hikes and interpretive programs, pancake breakfasts, competitions, games, and displays. (Community Development)
- **celebrated** the 25th anniversary of Kananaskis Country. Kananaskis Country was created as a multi-use recreation area by the Government of Alberta in 1978 and is one of Alberta's most popular year-round recreation destinations. (Community Development)

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